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ADVERTISEMENTS

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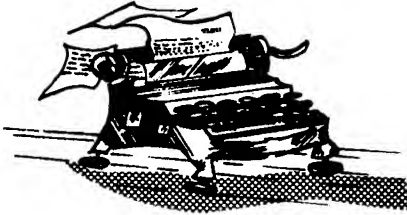
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frontispiece from NUMISMA Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1877

Editor's Notebook



Our frontispiece for this issue has been reproduced from the Volume 1, Number 1 issue of NUMISMA, January 1877, which was edited and published by Ed. Frossard. Our interest in NUMISMA began when we incorrectly identified Mr. Frossard in the August 1963 issue of CNL as the editor of THE COIN COLLECTOR'S JOURNAL published by Scott & Co. Mr. Walter Breen immediately took us to task for associating Frossard with CCJ and with the Novum Belgium article which we had reprinted, pointing out that Frossard and

Scott for many years hurled barbs at each other through the pages of CCJ and NUMISMA.

This tweaked our curiosity to the extent of tracking down the basis of our error and learning a bit about the Frossard-Scott relationship. We were especially intrigued since at the same time that we were reading Mr. Breen's letter we were looking at a front cover from CCJ showing in bold face type -- EDITED BY ED. FROSSARD !

As it turned out - Frossard did serve as editor of CCJ through the first year or so of its publication and then discontinued his association with Scott and established his own publication NUMISMA in January 1877. Those who would like to pursue the Novum Belgium episode in its entirety will find it nicely detailed in Don Taxay's book Counterfeit, Mis-Struck and Unofficial U. S. Coins, pp 139-145.

For several years Frossard carried as his frontispiece for NUMISMA a series of "three line" advertisements - and we thought our readers might be interested in seeing this one which Frossard used with his first issue and which included one of his own ads for Indian artifacts.

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We have just completed a mailing by first class mail of a questionnaire to all of our readers. We have had many problems with the mails, lost addresses, etc. and we are attempting to bring our mailing lists up to date and at the same time are requesting some general information regarding CNL. If you have not yet returned this questionnaire we will appreciate your doing so as soon as practicable.

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It is not our practice to recommend new books to our readers; however, it is our personal opinion that THE EARLY PAPER MONEY OF AMERICA by Eric P. Newman (Whitman Publishing Company) represents the first really coordinated and comprehensive source of data to appear on this subject. It will be indispensable to students and collectors of this material.

JCS



❧ LETTERS ❧

● --- from Richard Picker

A new variety of a Pine Tree XII - actually a new combination of previously known dies. It is obverse of Noe 17, and reverse of Noe 23 and would carry the Crosby designation 22-M. In order to be certain that it was not a sweated job from two coins, it was X-rayed in two different laboratories. Its weight was 66 3/4 grains, but, in order to further prove it as genuine, an edge was filed down, polished, and examined under a 400 power metallurgical microscope. It's definitely O.K. and a new discovery. It now weighs 66 1/4 grains.

● --- from Walter Breen

Sorry, the Pine Tree shilling you illustrated as TN-4 cannot qualify as genuine after all. It has every appearance of being an exceptionally deceptive style forgery of Noe 17.

A pre-Noe state of Noe 17 does exist, but the reverse is normal. This new variety was seen by me in the stock of G. G. Finnell and subsequently authenticated; it deserves description in detail, to avert confusion. Obverse as Noe 17 except:

- (1) I of IN thin;
- (2) recutting at H much less bold than in N-17;
- (3) pellets of inner circle at S-IN smaller than on N-17, three (rather than two) showing beneath final S;
- (4) in the rosette of 7 pellets following S, the east-northeast pellet (that nearest upright of I) is much smaller than N-17, and the positions of the pellets differ;
- (5) Arc of guide circle shows above HVS;
- (6) Roots differ, being more pronounced and closer together;
- (7) No die flaw at 2 branches at r.

Reverse die identically as on Noe 16.

This is the real predecessor of Noe 17. Note that on this, the letter forms are not essentially different, and in particular on the Noe 17 -- as on other Small Pine Tree Shillings -- letters were made with individual punches. On the alleged new variety they look as though hand engraved; in particular the S's are all different, as are the A's. On the reverse, in confirmation, the letters are likewise individually engraved. Considerations of shape and proportion rule out any possibility of weak punching and hand strengthening.

I think we can even rule out the possibility of its being a private imitation

made during the Puritan period of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pieces of that kind would hardly have made deliberate attempts to imitate such peculiarities of a single die variety as the recut H, crescent-shaped pellets, etc. Even the 19th century counterfeits were not so sophisticated. Only in modern times do you get that kind of awareness of criteria of genuineness. (Compare the deceptive forgery of Oak Tree Shilling Noe 5 without reverse die break.) The coin is accordingly rejected as spurious.

Other predecessor and reworked die states of Massachusetts silver are known. Some of them distinctive enough to be considered varieties by Noe's criteria. I append a description of a few known to me that were not described in my material in NUMISMATIC JOURNAL #2.

(B-16.6) Early state of dies of Noe 1. No beads below first A in MAS. ND in ENGLAND small. Branches more delicate and some are differently shaped. Compare ill. in Standard Catalogue.

(B-16.8) Second predecessor state of Noe 1. Beads under MAS. Large ND in ENGLAND. Tree as before; roots not as extensive as on Noe 1, no recuttings on trunk (look particularly at the long branch pointing northwest towards M); trunk above center dot is not shaggy; base of E very thin. Reverse NE apart, this E with thin sharp serifs, thin crossbar and lower stroke; none of the die injuries at ND of Noe 1. Compare lot 1, Lester Merkin auction October 1966.

(B-17.3) Obverse Line joining beads under MAS now gone. Reverse W reworked; thin and irregular. L thin, bottom serif of adjacent A gone, its feet small and rounded, step after AN gone, this N showing recutting; other letters thin and somewhat reworked; beads at 7:00 to 9:00 (inner circle) thin; XII apart, top of first I markedly low; advanced breaks at ND of ENGLAND, heavy rust pits over 165. Only one seen.


On the matter of the Massachusetts Cents and Half-Cent variety table, can a description of Massachusetts cent variety "8-G" be furnished, preferably with illustrations? Also, 1788 listing of 4-I and 5-H compounds earlier confusion. Complete descriptions would be appreciated.

● --- from Robert A. Vlack


A new die combination of previously known Conn. dies has been discovered. This combination has been checked out very carefully by at least two others besides myself, especially since the only known specimen is in just about fair to good condition. The obverse appears to be one of the final stages of die deterioration of the obverse Miller 48, and the reverse the same for the Miller k.3. The two dies may have been combined in an effort to try and produce just a few more coins before final withdrawal.

A COLONIAL NEWSLETTER REPRINT

- --- from Encyclopedia Britannica, Edinburgh, 1768-1771



In the first edition of Encyclopedia Britannica, Edinburgh, 1768-1771 appears an article and line drawings under the heading "Coinage, or Coining". This material was submitted to us by Edward R. Barnsley who authored the Connecticut Coppers article which appeared in the Sept. 1965 issue of CNL. Mr. Barnsley believes that some of our splinter specialists will find this of interest as there is so very very little known concerning the tools and techniques involved in the production of Early American Coins. We have retyped the text to eliminate the longesses but otherwise have retained the original spelling. Ed comments that Figure 2 on the plate has been reproduced at various times in the past, for example on the cover of the 1959 Hartford Numismatic Society pamphlet, but that no one gives credit to the source.



COINAGE, or Coining, the art of making money, as performed either by the hammer or mill.

Formerly the fabric of coins was different from what it is at present. They cut a large plate of metal into several little squares, the corners of which were cut off with sheers. After having shaped these pieces, so as to render them perfectly conformable, in point of weight, to the standard piece, they took each piece in hand again, to make it exactly round by a gentle hammering. This was called a planchet, and was fit for immediate coining. Then engravers prepared, as they still do, a couple of steel mailles in form of dyes, cut and terminated by a flat surface, rounded off at the edges. They engraved or stamped on it the hollow of a head, a cross, a scutcheon, or any other figure, according to the custom of the times, with a short legend. As one of these dyes was to remain dormant, and the other moveable, the former ended in a square prism, that it might

be introduced into the square hole of the block, which, being fixed very fast, kept the dye as steady as any vice could have done. The planchet of metal was horizontally laid upon this inferior mass, to receive the stamp of it on one side, and that of the upper dye, wherewith it was covered, on the other. This moveable dye, having its round engraved surface resisting upon the planchet, had at its opposite extremity a flat square, and larger surface, upon which they gave several heavy blows, with a hammer of an enormous size, till the double stamp was sufficiently, in relievo, impressed on each side of the planchet. This being finished, was immediately succeeded by another, and they thus became a standard coin, which had the degree of fineness of the weight and mark determined by the judgment of the inspectors, to make it good current money. The strong tempering which was and is still given to the two dyes, rendering them capable of bearing those repeated blows. Coining has been considerably improved and rendered expeditious, by several ingenious machines, and by a wise application of the surest physical experiments to the methods of fining, dyeing, and stamping the different metals.

The three finest instruments the mint-man uses, are the laminating engine; the machine for making the impressions on the edges of coins; and the mill.

After they have taken the laminae, or plates of metal, out of the mould into which they are cast, they do not beat them on the anvil, as was formerly done, but they make them pass and repass between the several rollers of the laminating engine, which being gradually brought closer and closer to each other, presently give the lamina its uniform and exact thickness. Instead of dividing the lamina into small squares, they at once cut clean out of it as many planchets as it can contain, by means of a sharp steel trepan, of a roundish figure, hollow within, and of a proportionable diameter, to shape and cut off the piece at one and the same time. After these planchets have been prepared and weighted with standard pieces, filed or scraped to get off the superfluous part of the metal, and then boiled and made clean, they arrive, at last, at the machine (fig. 1.), which marks them upon the edge; and finally, the mill (fig. 2), which, squeezing each of them singly between the two dyes, brought near each other with one blow, forces the two surfaces or fields of the piece to fill exactly all the vacancies of the two figures engraved hollow. The engine which serves to laminate lead, gives a sufficient notion of that which serves to flatten gold and silver laminae between rollers of a lesser size.

The principal pieces of the machine (fig.1.), to stamp coins on the edge, are two steel laminae, about a line thick. One half of the legend, or of the ring, is engraved on the thickness of one of the laminae, and the other half on the thickness of the other, and these two laminae are straight, although the planchet marked with them be circular.

When they stamp a planchet, they first put it between the laminae in such a manner, as that these being each of them laid flat upon a copper-plate, which is fastened upon a very thick wooden table, and the planchet being likewise laid flat upon the same plate, the edge of the planchet may touch the two laminae on each side, and in their thick part.

One of these laminae is immoveable, and fastened with several screws; the other sides by means of a dented wheel, which takes into the teeth that are on the surface of the lamina. This sliding lamina makes the planchet turn in such a manner, that it remains stamped on the edge, when it has made one turn. Only crown and half-crown pieces can bear the impression of letters on the thickness of their edges.

The coining engine or mill is so handy (fig.2.), that a single man may stamp twenty thousand planchets in one day: gold, silver, and copper planchets, are all of them coined with a mill, to which the coining squares (fig.3.), commonly called dyes, are fastened; that of the face under, in a square box garnished with male and female screws, to fix and keep it steady; and the other above, in a little box garnished with the same screws, to fasten the coining square. The planchet is laid flat on the square of the effigy, which is dormant; and they immediately pull the bar of the mill by its cords, which causes the screw set within it to turn. This enters into the female screw, which is in the body of the mill, and turns with so much strength that by pushing the upper square upon that of the effigy, the planchet, violently pressed between both squares, receives the impression of both at one pull, and in the twinkling of an eye.



COINING

Plate 'XLIV.

